Vol. VI. Numb. 16

THE OBSERVATOR.

Of the domineering Power of the High-Church Faction. They prefer the Church before the State, and make the State depend upon it. A long Text out of the Regale and Pontificate: *The* Obſervator's *Sermon upon it. Her Majeſty's Letter to his Grace the Lord Arch-Biſhop of* Canterbury, *in Relation to the lower Houſe of Convocation.*

From **Wednesday**, April 23. to **Saturday**, April 26. 1707.

Country-m. MAſter, I fancy ſome of our Clergy are like ſome we have had in the Miniſtry; they over-value their own Merit, and are angry at others, becauſe they won't inhaunce the Price, when there is too much bidden already. I am afraid there is a Conſpiracy betwixt Somebody and Somebody.

Obſ. That's for certain: But who are theſe Somebodies?

Country-m. Thoſe that won't let the QUEEN be HEAD of the *Church*, and thoſe that make themſelves the HEAD of the STATE, by calling themſelves the GOVERNMENT. On this Topick we ſhall go at another Time, and ſhow from the Writings of the *one*, and the Proſecutions of the *other*, that the *High-Statesmen*, and the *High-Church-men*, are good Friends, and reſolv'd to ſtand by one another in the Aggrandiſement of their own Power, and the Diminution of her Majeſty's legal Authority.

But, *Roger*, our Text is the *High-Church-men*, who would be the Lord's *Paramount* in Affairs Eccleſiaſtical, and would domineer in Temporals too; would ſhove the *Queen*, and elbow the *Nobility*; would make the Commons their Slaves, their Foot-men, and Lackies; and ALL Dependants on, as well as Supplicants to the Church; and this Power given them no where in Scripture, by Law or Reaſon, but from the *new fangl'd Hocus Pocus* Divinity of High-Church, calculated for the *Meridians* of Paſſive-Obedience, and Non-Reſiſtance. I will give you ſome Text ſuitable to this Diſcourſe, out of *Leſley*'s *Regale and Pontificate*, Pag. 220, 221. Says he,

This is the Church, *which in all Things, in its* Original, Conſtitution, Frame, *and* End *for which it was deſign'd, does far excel that Society call'd, the* STATE.

And all States *do in Words, give the Pre-eminence to the* Church. *It is not ſaid*, State *and* Church; *but always* Church *and* State.

Country-m. This is very pretty! High-Church Policy, and Sacerdotal Arrogance, all over! Don't we ſay in the Country, *Cart and Horſes*: We do in Words, put the *Cart* firſt; but from hence does it follow, that the *Cart* does far excel that Society call'd the TEAM? This is ſilly Stuff, Maſter.

Obſ. Then ſee how you like what follows; here's a long Text for you.

And the Stile (that is all) *of* Spiritual *and* Temporal, *remains ſtill, tho' I have ſeen wrote*, Lords Temporal *and* Spiritual, *particularly in the printed Liſts of this* Convention. *And in all the Liſts ſince, the* Spiritual Eſtate, *tho' it is the firſt of the* three Eſtates *in* our, *and in every other* Conſtitution, *yet is put behind all the* Lay Lords, *and the* Mitre *comes after their* Coronets. *As if a* Parchment *from an Earthly King, which he may beſtow upon his Foot-man, may have been worſe beſtow'd upon* Dukes *and* Dutcheſſes, *in abundance, who, inſtead of* Ermin, *ſhould have been dreſs'd in* Sack-cloth, *had there been any* Diſcipline *in the Church, yet were receiv'd by their* fellow Nobility, *as their* Peers; *whereas they were unworthy the Converſation of the* meaneſt Chriſtian, *and ought not to be admitted to it, 'till they have begg'd for it in the* Stool of Repentance. *I ſay, that ſuch* Patents of Honour *ſhould be thought more eſtimable, and of higher Dignity, even when worn by thoſe who were worthy of it, than the* Commiſſion *which* Chriſt *purchas'd with his Blood, and gave to thoſe he ſent into all the World, as his Father had ſent him.*

But this is one of our modern Improvements; *for in our fore Fathers Time, and in all Countries and Ages, the* Mitre *ſtood next to the* Crown, *even in the* civil Conſtitution; *and that not only upon the Head of one* Arch, *but of every* Biſhop.

Country-m. Maſter, this is a ſtrange long Text. Will you ſpeak to it firſt, and then I will ſay ſomething afterwards?

Obſ. This, *Roger*, is a *Claim of Right* of the *High-Church Prieſthood*, and therefore we will take it to pieces, and by that means diſcover how *right* their Claim is.

They claim Precedency to the Lords Temporal, and ſay, That the Biſhops are the firſt of the three Eſtates.

Now, you muſt underſtand, that they make four Eſtates in Parliament; Queen, Lords Spiritual, Lords Temporal, and Commons. I have confounded them in the Argument of four Eſtates already; and what I ſhall ſay at this Time, ſhall be only to ſhow the unthinking ſort of Mankind, the Deceit and Fallacies of a Knaviſh Prieſthood.

The Lords Spiritual and Temporal, are but one Eſtate, and do ſit and vote in the Houſe of Lords, as they are Barons; for no Peer votes there as he is a Duke, an Earl, a Marquiſs, *&c.* but as he is a Baron; and therefore every Peer is firſt created a Baron, and then other additional Titles flow to him from the Fountain of Honour, the King or Queen.

But 'tis the Precedency we ſpeak of; the *Rebearſer* will have the Biſhops to be before the Lords Temporal in that Houſe, in Words and Pre-eminence; and he calls them the *Spiritual Eſtate*. Now, I do deny, that there is any Spiritual Eſtate in the upper Houſe of Parliament, or in the Legiſlature; for it is directly contrary to our Conſtitution.

The

The Bishops, in their Share of the Legislature, are consider'd only in their Temporal Capacities: In *Convocation*, they are consider'd in their Religious or Spiritual Capacities: And that they are not a *single* or *separate Estate* in the Legislature, is evident from Fact. For were they a *constituent* Part of the Legislature, no Law could be pass'd without their Consent. But Laws have been, and may be pass'd without their Consent, tho' not one Bishop be present in the House: And therefore they are no *single*, *separate*, or *constituent* Part of the Legislature; for without them, any Law may be enacted.

If they are not one of the three Estates, then it necessarily follows, that they cannot be the first of the three Estates, as the *Regale and Pontificate* affirms. In the House of Commons, we have *Knights* representing the *Shires*, *Citizens* representing *Cities*, *Burgesses* representing *Corporations*, and the *Barons* of the *Cinque Ports*; yet not one of these, in Point of Legislature, has any Power above the rest, but have all an equal Authority, as they compose and make one House of Commons. And for that Reason I take it, that the old Way of petitioning them, is left off, Petitions being formerly directed to the Honourable the *Knights*, *Citizens*, and *Burgesses* in this present Parliament assembl'd, and now only to the Honourable *House of Commons* in Parliament assembl'd.

In the Upper House, they are petition'd not under the Titles of *Dukes*, *Marquisses*, *Earls*, *&c.* but as they are a *House of Lords*; and in Point of Pre-eminence, the *Pontificate* Men need not complain, *that the Mitre comes after the Coronet*, for it is so in Order of State. The *Lords Temporal* are *Nobiles nati & Conciliarii nati*, born Noble-men and Privy Counsellors. The Bishops are *electi*, chosen Bishops, and not a Part of the Legislature, as the Temporal Lords are, by *hereditary Right*. The Right the Temporal Lords have to the Legislature, descends, with their Estates, to their Posterity; but the Power of the Spiritual Lords, is *durante Vita* only, for when they die, their Office and Power does not descend to their Posterity, but that Vacancy or Chasm in the Legislature, is fill'd up, and made good according to the Will and Pleasure of the Crown.

Now, ye *English* Peers, pray look about you; stand up for your selves, for we can't help you against this High-Church Faction: Here you are call'd *ignoble Creatures*, threaten'd to be disrob'd of your *Ermins*, cloath'd in *Sack-cloth*, brought under the *Discipline of the Church*, and to the *Stool of Repentance*. What are you better than us, if your *Patents of Honour* shall, by a sawcy domineering Priesthood, be esteem'd *mere Parchments*, fit only for your *Foot-men*, and worse Persons.

But the Commission the Clergy have receiv'd, that is from God, and Christ purchas'd it with his Blood. Horrid Impiety! Did our Saviour, who never exercis'd any Temporal Power himself, give them a Civil Power, and set them above the *Princes* and *Rulers* of the Earth?

He says, this is a *new Improvement*; *in all Countries and Ages, the* Mitre *stood next to the* Crown, *even in the civil* Constitution. In many Countries there are neither *Crowns* nor *Mitres*; and what do Bishops stand there, but for Cyphers? And when they stand next the *Crown*, 'tis only to jostle the *Prince* that wears it; to dismount him, and leap into the *Throne* themselves.

Country-m. Well, Master, you have said what you have thought fit. What I have to say to the Point, has the Stamp of Royal Authority, as I find it in the *Post-Man*, No. 1767. in a Letter sent by her Majesty to his Grace the Lord Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, who having sent up for the lower House of the Clergy, communicated the same to them, as follows:

ANNE R.

"MOST Reverend Father in God, our right trusty, "and right entirely belov'd Counsellor, we greet "you well. In our Letter to you, bearing Date the "25th Day of *February*, 1705. which we directed to "be communicated to the Bishops and Clergy of the "Convocation of your Province, we declar'd our Re"solution to maintain our Supremacy, and the due Sub"ordination of Presbyters to Bishops, as fundamental "Parts of the Constitution of the Church of *England*. "We did hope, that so plain a Declaration of our Royal "Intention, would have been a sufficient Warning to "those of the Clergy, whose Innovations (contrary to "the Duty they owe'd to us and their Ecclesiastical Su"periors) gave us Occasion to make it. Yet, contrary to "our Expectation, we understand, that not only the "former illegal Practices are continu'd, but also, by the "Proceedings laid before us by you and their Suffra"gans, that the last Prorogation of the Convocation "held before you, which you made by our Command, "signify'd in our Writ, under our Great Seal, has been, "by divers of the Clergy of the said Convocation, in "their Application to you, reflected on as unprecident"ted, and contrary to the ancient and constant Usage of the "Convocation, which your self and the Bishops of your "Province were bound in Conscience to have seen main"tain'd and preserv'd to them. We are satisfy'd, that "Assertion is untrue in point of Fact, and amounts to a "plain Invasion of our Royal Supremacy, which is re"pos'd in us by the Law and the Constitution of the "Church of *England*; and that their subsequent Decla"ration being evasive, and contrary to what they had "before done, hath rather aggravated, than lessen'd the "Guilt of so dangerous an Attempt. As our repeated "Admonitions do sufficiently shew our Tenderness for "the Clergy, so our firm Resolution to preserve the "Constitution of the Church of *England*, as by Law "establish'd, and our rightful Supremacy, if any Thing "of the like Nature be attempted for the future, will "make it necessary for us (how unwilling soever we "are to proceed to those Measures) to use such Means "for the punishing Offences of this Nature, as are war"ranted by Law. All which we require you to com"municate to the Bishops and Clergy of your Province in "Convocation assembl'd; and so we bid you very heart"tily farewel. Given at our Court at *St. James's*, the "eighth Day of *April*, 1707. in the sixth Year of our "Reign. By her Majesty's Command,

SUNDERLAND.

Superscrib'd. To the most Reverend Father in God, our right trusty, and right entirely beloved Counsellor, *Thomas*, Lord Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, Primate of all *England*, and Metropolitan and President of the Convocation of the Province of *Canterbury*.

Obs. I am glad to see and hear this.

Country-m. And, Master, I have some Questions to ask you about it, which we must defer to another Opportunity.

Obs. The next Time we meet, I shall endeavour to satisfy you in all that I can.

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